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Department of State

OUTGOING
TELEGRAM

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DRAFTED BY 10/HR:MBZWEIBEN:BKM
APPROVED BY 10:PWILCOX
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E.O. 12055: GDS 3/1/88 (WILCOX, PHILIP)

TAGS: UNHRC, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: 38TH UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: ITEM 12 (B) --
1503 PROCEDURES: ARGENTINA

1. - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. FOLLOWING IS DEPARTMENT'S CLEARED POSITION PAPER ON
ARGENTINA UNDER AGENDA ITEM 12 (B):

TWENTY COMMUNICATIONS ON ARGENTINA FORWARDED TO THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION FOR ITS 38TH SESSION ALLEGED NUMEROUS
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, PARTICULARLY DISAPPEARANCES AND
TORTURE, AND REPORTS OF DEATH WHICH HAVE RESULTED. THE
GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA HAS RESPONDED TO NINE OF THESE
COMMUNICATIONS. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, THE LAWYERS'
COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE COMITE
ECUMENICO PRE-DERECHOS HUMANOS, COSTA RICA, AMONG OTHERS,
ALLEGED THOUSANDS OF DISAPPEARED OR DETAINED PERSONS,
DESCRIBE DEPLORABLE PRISON CONDITIONS, AND THE EXISTENCE
OF SECRET DETENTION CENTERS.

AT ITS 37TH SESSION, THE HRC ADOPTED WITHOUT A VOTE A
RESOLUTION TO CONTINUE REVIEW OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS IN ARGENTINA, BEARING IN MIND INFORMATION FROM

GOA OR OTHER SOURCES. THE COMMISSION PARTICULARLY
EMPHASIZED INTEREST IN THE FATE OF MISSING OR DISAPPEARED
PERSONS IN ARGENTINA, AN ISSUE WHICH STILL REMAINS TO
BE CLARIFIED. ARGENTINA IS A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION.

U.S. POSITION:

USDEL SHOULD SUPPORT WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATION TO
KEEP HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA UNDER REVIEW.

DISCUSSION:

THE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTRY REPORT HAS RECOGNIZED AN
IMPROVEMENT IN ARGENTINA'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES, AND
ARGENTINA HAS ASKED FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE IN GAINING
RECOGNITION FROM THE COMMISSION OF THE IMPROVEMENTS
DESCRIBED IN THE COUNTRY REPORTS. IT IS UNLIKELY,
HOWEVER, THAT THE COMMISSION DURING THE 38TH SESSION
WILL CONSIDER ANYTHING LESS THAN CONTINUED REVIEW OF

THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF ITS
CONCERN WITH THE FATE OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS. USDEL MAY
WISH TO STRESS TO GOA THE NEED FOR CONTINUED COOPERATION
WITH THE COMMISSION IN MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS
AND CLARIFYING THE RECORD ON THAT PROGRESS.

IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO
ARRIVE AT A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM THAT WOULD (A)
REFLECT THE FACTS, (B) STATE PROGRESS, AND (C) VALIDATE
THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HRC. USDEL SHOULD INDICATE THAT
THE 1503 FRAMEWORK OPERATES IN RESPONSE TO RECEIVED
COMMUNICATIONS SEPARATE FROM CONCLUSIONS IN THE COUNTRY
REPORTS.

RECENT REPORTS FROM THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN ARGENTINA
INDICATE THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA IS
VASTLY IMPROVED OVER THE RECENT PAST. HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVISTS AND OTHERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF
ACCOUNTING FOR DISAPPEARANCES. ON BALANCE, THERE HAVE
BEEN ALMOST NO DISAPPEARANCES IN THE PAST YEAR. THUS,
ARGENTINA IS FURTHER ALONG TOWARDS THE RULE OF LAW THAN
IT WAS A YEAR AGO, TO SAY NOTHING OF THE SITUATION IN
1979. HOWEVER, THE MILITARY CONTINUE TO FEEL VULNERABLE
TO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS FOR KEEPING THE ISSUE OF
DISAPPEARANCES ALIVE. THEY ARE LESS ABLE TO SEE THAT
WESTERN VALUES HAVE MADE IT NATURAL FOR MANY OTHERS TO
REJECT THE LEGITIMACY OF DISAPPEARANCE AND TO CONDEMN
ANY GOVERNMENT WHO PRACTICES IT. HAIG

Argentina

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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INCOMING
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EO 12065: GDS 3/2/88 (FRIEDMAN, T.B.) OR-P
 TAGS: SHUM, AR
 SUBJECT: (U) GOA CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITISM

1. SUMMARY: IN KEEPING WITH THE LIBERALIZING TRENDS HERE, THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN A STRONG STAND AGAINST ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS, MUCH STRONGER THAN ITS PREDECESSORS. IT MOVED QUICKLY, AND APPARENTLY SPONTANEOUSLY, TO CONDEMN THE DESECRATION OF A JEWISH CEMETERY. THEN IT TOLD THE LEADER OF THE LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY THAT IT WOULD MOVE TO SUPPRESS SCURRILOUSLY ANTI-SEMITIC PUBLICATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT'S STANCE HAS BEEN WARMLY RECEIVED BY THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. THE AUTHORITIES HERE HAVE MADE SURE THAT THEIR ACTIONS AND ATTITUDE WOULD BE GIVEN MAXIMUM PUBLICITY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA HAS GONE ON THE RECORD CLEARLY AND QUICKLY TO OPPOSE LOCAL ANTI-SEMITISM, MOVING MORE RAPIDLY AND UNAMBIGUOUSLY THAN ITS PREDECESSORS.

3. (U) THE DESECRATION OF A JEWISH CEMETERY NEAR THE LARGE RESORT CITY OF MAR DEL PLATA, PRECIPITATED THIS REACTION. THE PROFANATION INVOLVED THE OVERTURNING OF SEVERAL HEADSTONES AND THE PAINTING OF TWO SWASTIKAS IN THE CEMETERY.

4. (U) FOLLOWING THIS ACT, WHICH RECEIVED MUCH PUBLICITY, THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THE CONDEMNATION OF THE PROFANATION. IT ALSO STATED THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY, GENERAL HECTOR IGLESIAS, HAD SPOKEN TO MARIO GORENSTEIN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE DAIA (THE UMBRELLA JEWISH ORGANIZATION). IGLESIAS, THE PRESS WAS TOLD, HAD SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF PRESIDENT GALTIERI TO CONDEMN THE DESECRATION AND PROMISE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERTAKE AN EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION. AT THE SAME TIME THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS ANNOUNCING THESE SENTIMENTS, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES AND THE CITY OF LA PLATA WERE ECHOING THEM. SEVERAL PAPERS' EDITORIALS CONDEMNED THE PROFANATION.

5. (U) ON MARCH 1, GORENSTEIN CALLED ON UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR BERNARDO MENENDEZ. AFTERWARDS, GORENSTEIN TOLD THE PREEE THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS THE CIRCULATION IN ARGENTINA OF NAZI AND NEO-NAZI MAGAZINES WHICH INCITE RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL HATRED. MENENDEZ TOLD HIM THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL USE LEGAL MEASURES AND THE FEDERAL POLICE TO REMOVE SUCH PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWSSTANDS AND DISTRIBUTION POINTS. GORENSTEIN ALSO STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S "RAPID" AND "SPONTANEOUS" REACTION TO THE CEMETERY DESECRATION WAS "UNPRECEDENTED."

6. COMMENT: THE GOA'S REACTION TO THE CEMETERY INCIDENT IS

INDEED UNPRECEDENTED IN OUR MEMORY. AND THE COMMITMENT THAT MENENDEZ MADE TO STOP THE CIRCULATION OF HATE-FILLED, NEO-NAZI MAGAZINES - ACTUALLY THEY ARE CLOSER TO PAMPHLETS - IS ALSO UNUSUAL. RELATIVELY HARD TO FIND IN ANY CASE, THEY WERE BRIEFLY SUPPRESSED LAST YEAR, BUT THEN BEGAN REAPPEARING. WE DOUNT THAT MENENDEZ HAS IN MIND SUPPRESSING "CABILDO", A RIGHTIST-NATIONALIST MAGAZINE OF MODEST BUT SIGNIFICANT CIRCULATION, WHICH HAS OCCASIONALLY INCLUDED ANTI-SEMITIC MATERIALS.

7. TWO ELEMENTS STRIKE US IN THIS STORY. FIRST, THE GOA'S DESIRE TO MAKE A PUBLIC RECORD OF ITS ATTITUDES ON THESE MATTERS. IT QUICKLY TOLD THE PRESS WHAT IT HAD DONE AFTER THE CEMETERY WAS PROFANED. GORENSTEIN, WE ARE TOLD, WAS LED TO THE PRESS CON-FERENCE BY COL. MENENDEZ. SECOND, THE GOA'S ACTIONS ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE LIBERALIZING TREND WE DESCRIBED BEFORE.

8. IN KEEPING WITH THE GREATER OPENESS HERE, WE ARE INFORMED BY THE LEADER OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN ARGENTINA THAT HIS GROUP IS NOW ABLE TO USE ITS CHURCHES AND OTHER FACILITIES, WHICH WERE CLOSED TO THEM FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. THIS ACCESS TO THEIR PROPERTIES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP BECAME POSSIBLE IN LATE NOVEMBER OR SO. THE WITNESSES, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT YET OBTAINED THE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION WHICH WOULD PLACE THEM ON THE SAME FOOTING AS OTHER RELIGIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OPERATING IN ARGENTINA. NEVERTHELESS, DE FACTO, THEY ARE OPERATING FREELY. THE GOA HAS NOT PUBLICIZED THIS DEVELOPMENT.

SHLAUDMAN

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade toDate ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason ☐

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